

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-3 and 10 are presently amended. Claims 14 and 15 are added. Support for the amendment of claims 1 and 10 is found at least at Figure 2 and paragraph 0092 in the specification. Support for the amendment of claims 2 and 3, and new claim 14, is found at least in the original claims. Support for new claim 15 is found at least in the original claims and in paragraph 0020 of the specification. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding final Office Action, claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Semrad, U.S. 5,234,438. Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Lehe, U.S. 6,273,852. Claim 11 was indicated as being allowable. Claims 12 and 13 were objected to as being allowable, but dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the personal interview granted to Applicants' representatives on March 22, 2005. Claim 10 is presently amended to include the limitation that the coupler includes a lumen. In the interview, it was agreed that the proposed amendment of claim 10 would apparently overcome the cited prior art rejections, but that the proposed amendment would require further search and consideration.

As discussed in the interview, claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Semrad, U.S. 5,234,438. Semrad discloses a pulling tip that is attached at one end to a catheter or needle, while the other end is attached to a suture that is used to pull the pulling tip and its attached catheter or needle to its correct subcutaneous location. The pulling tip appears to have a body with a first and second end and some structure for attaching the pulling tip to the catheter or needle. However, Semrad does not disclose that

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the coupler includes a lumen. Lacking this element, it is believed that Semrad does not anticipate claim 10 as now amended, and that claim 10 should be allowed.

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Lehe, U.S. 6,273,852. Claim 1 is amended in this response. As discussed in the interview, Lehe discloses a surgical instrument and method for treating female urinary stress incontinence. Lehe fails to disclose or suggest a coupler as provided in the present invention as amended. Lacking this element, it is believed that Lehe does not anticipate the present invention as now claimed. Claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom, claims 2-9, should therefore be allowed.

Submitted herein is a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement. The Office noted in its Office Action of June 16, 2004 that certain references in the Form 1449 submitted on July 11, 2003 were not considered because no date was listed. Applicants have herein provided more complete information, including dates, for most of the previously unconsidered references, to correct earlier inadvertent omissions. Due consideration of such references is respectfully requested.

In light of the above discussion, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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